



# Projections of the Population of Voting Age, for States: November 1988

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## INTRODUCTION

This report presents projections of the population of voting age (18 years and over) for States on November 1, 1988, by broad age groups and sex. Projections of the State voting-age populations are also shown by race and Hispanic origin. These projections are designed to serve as a reference for the primary elections and the November general election for President and members of the 101st Congress of the United States. They are based on the resident population of the United States including members of the Armed Forces where they reside at their duty stations. They exclude the population overseas (currently about 520,000 Armed Forces and 65,000 Federal civilian employees plus their dependents of voting age, and an unknown number of other American citizens residing overseas) who would be eligible to vote by absentee ballot in their home State.

This report also includes voting-age estimates for States and percent voting for President and House of Representatives since 1980, as well as national voting patterns since 1930.

## GENERAL TRENDS

The voting-age population of the United States is expected to reach 183 million persons by November 1,

1988, an increase of over 4.1 million or 2.3 percent since the 1986 Congressional election (table A.). Since the Presidential election in 1984, the voting-age population has grown by more than 8 million persons.

As the smaller cohorts born at the end of the Baby Boom have reached age 18, the growth in the voting-age population has slowed in recent years. The children born during the height of the Baby Boom became old enough to vote during the 1970's, causing the voting-age population to grow by over 4 percent between the biennial election dates.

The growth in the voting-age population continues to be concentrated in the 25-44 age group (table B.). Since 1980, this group has increased by nearly 17 million persons, from 62.7 to 79.4 million, and is now almost totally composed of the Baby Boom cohorts (persons born between 1946 to 1964). This group has increased its already dominant share of the voting-age population from 38.5 in 1980 to 43.5 percent in 1988. During the 1980-88 period, the 65-and-over group grew by 5.1 million persons, increasing its share of the voting-age population from 15.7 to 16.8 percent. In contrast, the 45-to-64 group grew by only 1.5 million persons, dropping its share of the population from 27.3 percent in 1980 to 25.2 percent in 1988.

**Table A. Estimated Voting-Age Population and Change Since Last Election Year: 1968 to 1988**

(Numbers in thousands. Beginning 1972 ages 18 and over; prior to 1972 ages 21 and over for all States except four)

Nov 1 of year	Voting-age population	Change since previous date		Nov 1 of year	Voting-age population	Change since previous date	
		Number	Percent			Number	Percent
1988 <sup>1</sup> .....	182,628	4,146	2.3	1976 .....	152,308	5,970	4.1
1986 .....	178,482	4,015	2.3	1974 .....	146,338	5,561	4.0
1984 .....	174,467	4,528	2.7	1972 .....	140,777	16,279	13.1
1982 .....	169,939	5,344	3.2	1970 .....	124,498	4,213	3.5
1980 .....	164,595	6,226	3.9	1968 .....	120,285	3,647	3.1
1978 .....	158,369	6,061	4.0				

<sup>1</sup>Projection.  
Source: Table 5.

**Table B. Population of Voting Age, by Broad Age Groups, 1960 to 1988**

(Numbers in thousands)

Year	Total	18-24 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65 years and over	Percent of total			
						18-24 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65 years and over
1988 (Nov. 1) <sup>1</sup> .....	182,628	26,556	79,377	46,098	30,597	14.5	43.5	25.2	16.8
1980 census.....	162,791	30,022	62,717	44,503	25,549	18.4	38.5	27.3	15.7
1970 census.....	133,568	23,697	47,995	41,810	20,066	17.7	35.9	31.3	15.0
1960 census.....	115,121	15,604	46,899	36,057	16,560	13.6	40.7	31.3	14.4

<sup>1</sup>Projection

Source: Table 1 and various Census report age tables.

The size of the 18-to-24 age group continues to decline as the Baby Boom generation ages and the smaller birth cohorts of the late 1960's and 1970's reach voting age. This group will lose over 3.5 million persons, and, by 1988, will constitute only 14.5 percent of the total voting-age population.

By November 1, 1988, more than 63 million persons of voting age—more than one-third of the voting-age total in the United States—are expected to reside in the South. Since the 1986 Congressional election, this represents an increase of almost 2 million persons or 3.2 percent. Among the four regions of the United States, the West has the smallest number of persons of voting age, but it continues to be the fastest growing region, increasing by almost 4 percent since the 1986 election.

The age distribution of the voting-age population is similar among most States. The median age is highest in Florida where half of the voting-age population is above age 45 (table 1.), and almost one-fourth is above age 65. Alaska has the youngest voting-age population, with 18 percent between the ages of 18 to 24 and almost 55 percent between the ages of 25 to 44.

Women represent over 52 percent of the voting-age population, outnumbering men by almost 8 million (table 2.). They represent the majority in every State except Alaska (47.2 percent) and Hawaii (49.4 percent), both of which have large military populations, along with Wyoming (48.3 percent), Nevada (49.3 percent), and North Dakota (49.8 percent). The Northeastern States have the highest proportion of women in the voting-age population: 53 percent.

Women outnumber men in all voting age groups except for 18 to 24, where the numbers are virtually equal. Among persons aged 65 and over, women represent almost 60 percent of the population.

## RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN

By November 1, 1988, Blacks will number 20.4 million and represent 11 percent of the persons of voting age (table C.). Another 5.6 million or 3 percent of the

voting-age population will be races other than White or Black; virtually all persons of other races are Asian and Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts.

More than one-half of the Black voting-age population is expected to reside in the South (table 3.). The District of Columbia has a higher proportion of Blacks in its electorate (64.8 percent) than any State. At least 1 out of every 5 persons of voting-age in Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, Georgia, Maryland, Alabama, and North Carolina will be Black.

The voting-age population of races other than Black or White is concentrated in the Western states, especially in California and in Hawaii, where almost two-thirds of the population is of other races (mainly Asian and Pacific Islander). "Other races" represent over 17 percent of Alaska's voting-age population (mostly American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts). California, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Arizona, Washington, and Montana are the only other States to have more than 5 percent "other races" among the voting-age population.

Persons of Hispanic origin, who may be of any race,

**Table C. Projections of the Population of Voting Age, by Race and Hispanic Origin, for Regions: 1988**

(Numbers in thousands)

Race and Hispanic origin	United States	North-east	North Central	South	West
Total .....	182,628	38,402	43,952	63,032	37,242
Percent:					
White .....	85.7	87.8	89.5	81.5	86.3
Black .....	11.2	10.1	8.9	16.9	5.2
Other races ...	3.1	2.0	1.5	1.6	8.5
Hispanic <sup>1</sup> .....	7.1	5.7	2.3	6.2	15.9

<sup>1</sup>Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race and are included in the race data.

Source: Table 3.

are expected to make up about 7 percent of the voting-age population on November 1, 1988. At that

time, there will be over 13 million Hispanics of voting age. Nearly two-thirds of the Hispanic population 18 and over is concentrated in three states: California, Texas, and New York. One of every 3 persons of voting age in New Mexico will be of Hispanic origin, and over 20 percent of the voting-age population in California and Texas will be Hispanic. In New York, Colorado, and Arizona, over 10 percent of the voting-age population will be Hispanic.

## VOTER PARTICIPATION

The estimates of voter participation shown here are based on official tabulations of votes cast provided by each State. They should not be confused with estimates of voter participation published regularly in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, which are obtained from household surveys in order to assess the voting and registration patterns of various demographic groups. The survey estimates indicate levels of voting somewhat higher than those supported by the official voting statistics.

Voter participation in the 1984 Presidential election was 53.1 percent, up half a percentage point from the level of the 1980 election, but well below the participation level of 62.8 percent in the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon election (table 5). From 1960 to 1980, each Presidential election resulted in lower levels of voter participation, with the sharpest decline of 5 percentage points between 1968 and 1972 largely resulting from the lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18 and the low voting rates in the 18-20 age group. However, the number of voters has increased steadily over the years, because of the substantial increases in the voting-age population. Almost 93 million persons voted for President in 1984, and if the same proportion votes in 1988, nearly 97 million votes will be cast.

Highest voter participation traditionally takes place in the West North Central States and New England. These two divisions averaged 61 and 59 percent voting for President in 1984 (table 4). Minnesota had the highest voter participation of any State, with 68.2 percent voting in the 1984 election. Other States with very high voter turnout in the 1984 Presidential election were Montana (65.1 percent), Maine (64.8 percent), and seven other States that had more than 60 percent voting - Wisconsin, North and South Dakota, Iowa, Oregon, Utah, and Connecticut.

The South has consistently had the lowest voter turnout, but the gap between the South and the remainder of the United States is not nearly as great since the voting rights reforms of the 1960's. The lowest voter participation in the 1984 Presidential election was in South Carolina (40.7 percent), Nevada (41.5 percent), and Georgia (42.0 percent). The District of Columbia had 43.2 percent voting.

Voting for the House of Representatives in Presidential election years generally falls short of the Presidential vote by several percent. Some part of this difference results from nontabulation of votes in uncontested elections in three Southern States (Arkansas, Florida, and Oklahoma) and the use of the general election only for runoff purposes after an open primary in Louisiana. This difference in voter turnout, however, occurred in every region and every State in 1984. In six States, however, the difference was less than one-half percentage point (Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Alaska, Wyoming, and North Carolina.) Only Arizona had a differential of as little as 1 percentage point in 1980.

In nonpresidential election years, voting for the House of Representatives tends to be much lower than in Presidential election years. In 1986, it was 33.4 percent nationally, compared with 47.8 in 1984. Voter turnout in 1982 for the House of Representatives was higher (37.7 percent) than in 1986.

## POPULATION INELIGIBLE TO VOTE

The population of voting age includes a number of persons who meet the age requirement but cannot vote. Because of shortened State residence requirements for voting in national elections and the availability of absentee ballots, very few persons are now disenfranchised because they change residence before the election. Since citizenship is a universal requirement for voting in the United States, aliens are the principal group of ineligible voting-age persons. About 6.5 million legal aliens and 2.5 million undocumented aliens 18 and over are included in the estimates shown here and represent about 5 percent of the total population of voting age. In addition somewhat more than 680,000 persons will be ineligible to vote because they will be in prisons or mental hospitals.

## METHODOLOGY

The estimates of the population of voting age for States on November 1, 1980, 1982, and 1984, are based on final 1980 census counts and estimates of the resident population of States by age for July 1, 1981, to 1985. The estimates and projections of the population of voting age for November 1, 1986, and 1988 are based on the estimates for 1986 and revised projections of the population of States by age for July 1, 1987, to July 1, 1989. For November 1, 1980, the population age 18 and over is interpolated from the April 1, 1980, census and the July 1, 1981, estimates and adjusted to national controls. The estimates and projections for November 1, 1982, 1984, 1986, and 1988, are similarly derived by interpolation of estimates and projections between the appropriate July 1 dates.

The November 1, 1988, projections of the voting-age population for States are consistent with a soon-to-be-released set of revised population projections by age, sex, and race for States. These projections use a cohort-component technique with assumptions about fertility, mortality, and migration to extend the July 1, 1986, estimates of State population forward by age. The migration assumptions are based on an examination of the overall State migration patterns from 1975 to 1986 and the patterns by age and race developed from the 1980 decennial census data. A more complete discussion of the methodology along with a full set of the projections will be included in a forthcoming publication in the Current Population Reports, Series P-25.

The projections of the voting-age population for States by Hispanic origin for November 1, 1988, are developed by extrapolating the 1981 to 1985 trends in the estimated percentage of the population that was Hispanic origin. The estimates of the Hispanic population are developed using Social Security and Internal Revenue Service data to measure migration of the Hispanic population. A report containing the developmental Hispanic estimates for states and selected subareas will be released by the Census Bureau in 1988.

The percent voting in each election was obtained by dividing the reported number of voters for President or the House of Representatives for each State by the State's estimated population 18 and over for November 1 of each election year. The percent voting for U.S. Representatives as shown in table 4 may not be a fair representation of voter participation in certain States. In Arkansas, Florida, and Oklahoma, votes may not have been tabulated for all Congressional seats because uncontested elections do not require tabulation. In Louisiana, the November general election is used as a runoff election (where necessary) for the State's open congressional primary. In addition, the latest estimated population includes persons not eligible to vote.

## RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN DEFINITIONS

**Race.** The estimates and projections by race shown in this report are consistent with the racial classifications used in the most recent sets of population estimates and with the racial classifications used by the Office of Management of Budget. The 1980 census racial categories were modified to be consistent with sources of other administrative data. This modification procedure is described in more detail in Jeffrey S. Passel, "Procedures for Producing Preliminary OMB-Consistent Modified Race Data from the 1980 Census by Age, Sex, and Hispanic Origin for States and Counties," Bureau of the Census, unpublished.

The census data on race reflect self-identification by respondents. It does not denote any clear-cut scientific definition of biological stock.

The category "White" includes persons who indicated their race as White, as well as persons who did not classify themselves in one of the specified race categories listed on the questionnaire but entered a response such as Canadian, German, Italian, Lebanese, or Polish. In addition, about 6.3 million persons were added through the modification procedure. Most of those identified themselves as Hispanic origin and reported themselves as "other races" initially.

The category "Black" includes persons who indicated their race as Black or Negro, as well as persons who did not classify themselves in one of the specific race categories listed on the questionnaire but reported entries such as Jamaican, Black Puerto Rican, West Indian, Haitian, or Nigerian. The modification added about 188,000 persons to the Black category.

The category "other races" as shown in this report, includes Asian and Pacific Islanders, American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut. A very small proportion of the "other races" population reported themselves in other categories.

**Hispanic origin.** Persons of Hispanic origin are those who classified themselves in one of the specific Spanish-origin categories listed on the questionnaire. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Preliminary evaluations of 1980 census data suggest some limited overreporting of Hispanic origin in some States with relatively small Hispanic populations. The Hispanic data for States used in this report have been modified to exclude those persons where upon examination of the detailed decennial data, there was no supporting evidence of Hispanic origin. In addition, a small number of persons were reclassified into the Hispanic category where upon further examination of the detailed decennial data, there was strong evidence of Hispanic origin. A more complete discussion of these modifications can be found in Jeffrey S. Passel and David L. Word, "Problems in Analyzing Race and Hispanic Origin Data from the 1980 Census: Solutions Based on Constructing Consistent Populations from Micro-Level Data," presented at the 1987 annual meeting of the Population Association of America, Chicago, Illinois, April-May 1987; and "Preliminary Evaluation of Responses in the Mexican Origin Category of the Spanish Origin Item," in U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population, Supplementary Report, PC80-S1-7, *Persons of Spanish Origin by State: 1980*, pp. 14-17, Washington, D.C., August 1982.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE NUMBERS

The projections of the population of voting age for November 1, 1988, are developed by extending the July 1, 1986, estimates for States by age forward using

the projected patterns of mortality and migration by age. An evaluation of the procedure for developing population estimates for states by age for the 1970-80 period revealed an average error of 0.7 percent for the voting age population. (See Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1010 for a more complete discussion of the evaluation.) The projection of the mortality and migration patterns by age would be expected to contribute some additional error to the 1988 numbers shown in this report.

The numbers contained here are designed to provide approximate growth patterns and levels of the voting-age population. Small differences between figures, as well as small changes over time, should be interpreted cautiously.

## **RELATED REPORTS**

The estimates of the voting-age population for November 1982 and 1984 are consistent with estimates of the population of States by age for July 1, 1981, to 1986 published in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1010. The estimates for November 1980, 1982,

and 1984, supersede those published in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 948 and Press Release 86-65. Estimates for earlier years for States are contained in Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 948, 916, and 879.

Related data from the Current Population Survey on reported voting and registration in the Congressional elections of November 1986 are published in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 414, and data for the Congressional and Presidential elections of November 1984 appear in Series P-20, No. 405.

Statistics on the Presidential and Congressional elections used in this report to estimate the percent voting are published biennially in U.S. Congress, Clerk of the House, Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election, as appropriate, and in biennial publications of the Federal Election Commission.

## **ROUNDING OF ESTIMATES**

The estimates shown in the tables of this report have been rounded to the nearest thousand without adjustment to group totals, which are independently rounded. The percentages are based on unrounded numbers.